

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A computer system for capturing video, comprising:
an operating system operably coupled to a hardware
5 interface;

a camera operably coupled to the hardware interface; and
a privacy mechanism operably coupled to the hardware
interface for preventing the camera from capturing video.

10 2. The system of claim 1 further comprising a sensor
operably coupled to the camera for sensing the position of a
lens cover.

3. The system of claim 2 wherein the sensor comprises a
15 toggle switch.

4. The system of claim 1 further comprising a video
control operably coupled to the hardware interface.

20 5. The system of claim 4 wherein the video control
further comprises an indicator that uses at least one member
of the set comprising visual, audible, and tactile
representations.

6. The system of claim 4, wherein a button of the video control resides on a computer housing.

7. The system of claim 4, wherein a button of the video control resides on a computer keyboard.

8. The system of claim 4, wherein a button of the video control resides on a computer monitor.

9. The system of claim 4, wherein a button of the video control resides on a communications panel.

10. The system of claim 4, wherein a button of the video control resides on a remote control.

11. The system of claim 4, wherein a button of the video control resides on the camera.

12. The system of claim 4 wherein the video control comprises a shutter button.

13. The system of claim 4 wherein the video control comprises a capture button.

14. The system of claim 1 wherein the operating system comprises a component with control handling logic for communicating the position of the lens cover to an application
5 program.

15. The system of claim 1 wherein the operating system comprises a component with logic for controlling an indicator of a video control button.
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16. A camera for a computer system, comprising:
a camera housing with a lens cover; and
a sensor operably coupled to the camera for sensing the position of the lens cover to determine a state of operation
15 in the computer system for capturing video.

17. The camera of claim 16 further comprising an actuator for moving the lens cover.

20 18. A method for capturing video in a computer system, comprising the steps of:

receiving an input signal from a video control requesting a change in a state of operation of control handling logic for capturing video in the computer system;

changing the state of operation of the control handling logic for capturing video; and

executing a mode of operation for capturing video for the changed state.

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19. The method of claim 18 further comprising the step of saving the video on a computer-readable medium.

20. The method of claim 18 wherein receiving an input
10 signal from a video control comprises receiving an input signal from a capture button.

21. The method of claim 18 wherein receiving an input
signal from a video control comprises receiving an input
15 signal from a shutter button.

22. The method of claim 18 wherein changing the state of operation of the control handling logic for capturing video comprises changing the state of operation of the control
20 handling logic to stopped.

23. The method of claim 18 wherein changing the state of operation of the control handling logic for capturing video

comprises changing the state of operation of the control handling logic to capturing.

24. The method of claim 18 wherein changing the state of
5 operation of the control handling logic for capturing video comprises changing the state of operation of the control handling logic to paused.

25. The method of claim 18, wherein changing the state
10 of operation of the control handling logic for capturing video comprises activating an indicator using at least one member of the set comprising visual, audible, and tactile representations.

15 26. The method of claim 18 wherein executing a mode of operation for capturing video comprises capturing a still image.

27. The method of claim 18 wherein executing a mode of
20 operation for capturing video comprises capturing a video stream.

28. The method of claim 18 wherein executing a mode of operation for capturing video comprises moving a lens cover to uncover a lens.

5 29. The method of claim 18 wherein executing a mode of operation for capturing video comprises moving a lens cover to cover a lens.

30. The method of claim 18 wherein executing a mode of
10 operation for capturing video comprises streaming video for preview on a display.

31. The method of claim 18 wherein executing a mode of operation for capturing video comprises adding video to an
15 existing telephone call.

32. The method of claim 18 wherein executing a mode of operation for capturing video comprises disconnecting video from an existing telephone call.

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33. The method of claim 18 wherein executing a mode of operation for capturing video comprises connecting a telephone call.

34. The method of claim 18 wherein executing a mode of operation for capturing video comprises terminating a telephone call.

5 35. The method of claim 18 wherein executing a mode of operation for capturing video comprises the steps of:
verifying the camera lens is uncovered; and
capturing the video.

10 36. The method of claim 35 wherein the step of verifying the camera lens is uncovered further comprises automatically opening a movable lens cover to uncover the camera lens.

15 37. The method of claim 35 wherein the step of verifying the camera lens is uncovered further comprises the steps of:
determining the camera lens is covered; and
automatically opening a movable lens cover to uncover the camera lens.

20 38. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 18.

39. A method for capturing video in a computer system, comprising the steps of:

receiving an input signal from a video control requesting a change in a state of operation of a control handling logic in the computer system for selecting a type of video to capture;

5 changing the state of operation of the control handling logic for selecting the type of video to capture; and

executing a mode of operation for capturing the selected type of video.

10 40. The method of claim 39 further comprising the step of saving the selected type of video on a computer-readable medium.

15 41. The method of claim 39 wherein selecting the type of video to capture comprises selecting a still image.

42. The method of claim 39 wherein selecting the type of video to capture comprises selecting a video stream.

20 43. The method of claim 39 wherein selecting the type of video to capture comprises answering an incoming telephone call.

44. The method of claim 39 wherein selecting the type of video to capture comprises adding a video stream to an audio telephone call.

5 45. The method of claim 39 wherein selecting the type of video to capture comprises adding a video stream to instant messaging.

10 46. The method of claim 39 wherein executing a mode of operation for capturing the selected type of video comprises the steps of:

 automatically opening a movable lens cover to uncover the camera lens; and

 capturing the type of video selected.

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47. The method of claim 39 wherein executing a mode of operation for capturing the selected type of video comprises the steps of:

 determining the camera lens is uncovered; and

20 capturing the type of video selected.

48. The method of claim 39 wherein executing a mode of operation for capturing the selected type of video comprises the steps of:

determining that there is insufficient light for
capturing the type of video selected; and
broadcasting a still image.

5 49. The method of claim 48 wherein the still image
comprises an image defined by the user.

50. The method of claim 48 wherein the still image
comprises the last frame captured with sufficient light.

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51. The method of claim 39, wherein changing the state
of operation of the control handling logic for selecting the
type of video to capture comprises activating an indicator
using at least one member of the set comprising visual,
15 audible, and tactile representations.

52. The method of claim 39 wherein receiving an input
signal from a video control comprises receiving an input
signal from a shutter button.

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53. The method of claim 39 wherein receiving an input
signal from a video control comprises receiving an input
signal from a capture button.

54. A system for capturing video, comprising the steps
of:

means for sending an input signal for requesting a change
in a state of operation of a control handling logic in the
5 computer system for selecting a type of video to capture;

means for changing the state of operation of the control
handling logic for selecting the type of video to capture; and

means for executing a mode of operation for capturing the
selected type of video.

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55. The system of claim 54 wherein the means for
executing a mode of operation for capturing the selected type
of video comprises means for automatically activating a
privacy mechanism operably coupled to the camera.

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56. A computer-readable medium having computer-
executable components, comprising:

a video control for inputting a command to an application
having video capture functionality; and

20 an operating system having a component operably coupled
to the video control and the application, the component
receiving the input command from the video control and sending
the input command to the application.

57. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions, comprising:

detecting an input signal from a video control requesting
a change in a state of operation of a control handling logic
5 in a computer system for selecting a type of video to capture;
changing the state of operation of the control handling
logic for selecting the type of video to capture; and
executing a mode of operation for capturing the selected
type of video.

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